

TALKING TO YOUR KIDS ABOUT COVID-19

Your Attitude Affects Outcome

Your attitude as a parent affects the anxiety level in your home.

Our children pick up on our moods and concerns. We need to be careful about what we choose to focus on and how we express ourselves during this uncertain, rapidly changing time.

Consider Your News Sources

- What are you reading?
- How often are you checking the news?
- What are you talking about and how are you talking to friends and family?

PROMPTS FOR MEANINGFUL CONVERSATION

The following three prompts can be spread out over the week. Plan for at least 15 minutes to have these conversations.

Consider the following model:

- Have one person read the prompt.
- Let each person respond to the prompt, speaking uninterrupted as long as needed. (Younger children may need encouragement and questions to keep sharing.)
- Remind each person to respond to the question, *not* what anyone else has said.
- After everyone has spoken, talk about what you learned from each other and about each other.
What did you have in common?

- Make a plan as a family to keep practicing the things you've each learned through your family discussion.

Prompt #1: Practicing Gratitude

“What are some of the things for which you each are grateful?”

Let each person share their thoughts. Consider having one person jot down each thing so you can post it somewhere in the house where you can all see it.

Concluding Your Conversation: When we're grateful, we're able to cope with difficulties much more effectively. We're also better able to take care of ourselves when we're grateful than when we are sad or fearful.

End your conversation by reviewing the ways gratitude actually boosts our immune system. Encourage one another to practice more gratitude daily.

Prompt #2: Taking a Break

“What are some things we can do when we need to take a break or calm down?”

Affirm your children's ideas! Post everyone's ideas on the refrigerator and keep adding to them as you think of new ones.

Concluding Your Conversation: End your conversation with acknowledgement that while social media might feel like a break, it can actually raise our anxiety levels. Encourage one another to try some of these new ways to take a break instead of turning to electronics.

Prompt 3: The Difference Between Avoiding and Coping

“What are examples of and the differences in avoiding something and coping with it?”

For Youngers: Encourage them to talk about a time they may have been afraid of the dark, but eventually were able to go to bed alone. (If your child hasn't mastered this yet, choose another area of growth you've seen in him or her.)

For Olders: Encourage them to talk about what happens when they have a disagreement with a friend. What's the difference between choosing to ignore them or mustering courage to talk things through with that friend?

Concluding Your Conversation: *“When we cope with something, it is no longer stressful, but when we avoid something, it takes our effort to be sure we stay removed from it.”*